

LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 959
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Masterpieces of American Humor

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**HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY
GIRARD, KANSAS**

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THAT FAITHFUL WIFE OF IDAHO

JOAQUIN MILLER

Huge silver snow-peaks, white as wool,
Huge, sleek, fat steers knee-deep in grass,
And belly-deep, and belly full,
Their flower beds one fragrant mass
Of flowers, grass tall-born and grand,
Where flowers chase the flying snow!
Oh, high held land in God's right hand,
Delicious, dreamful Idaho!

We rode the rolling cow-sown hills,
That bearded cattleman and I;
Below us laughed the blossomed rills,
Above, the dappled clouds flew by.
We talked. The topic? Guess. Why, sir,
Three-fourths of all men's time they keep
To talk, to think, to be of HER;
The other fourth they give to sleep.

To learn what he might know, or how,
I laughed all constancy to scorn.
"Behold yon happy, changeful cow!
Behold this day, all storm at morn,
Yet now 'tis changed by cloud and sun;
Yea, all things change—the heart, the head;
Behold on earth there is not one
That changeth not in love," I said.

He drew a glass, as if to scan
The steeps for steers; raised it and sighed.

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He craned his neck, this cattleman,
Then drove the cork home, and replied:
"For twenty years (forgive these tears)—
For twenty years no word of strife,
I have not known for twenty years
One folly from my faithful wife."

I looked that tarn man in the face—
That dark-browed, bearded cattleman.
He pulled his beard, then dropped in place
A broad right hand, all scarred and tan,
And toyed with something shining there
Above his holster, bright and small.
I was convinced. I did not care
To agitate his mind at all.

But rest I could not. Know I must
The story of my stalwart guide;
His dauntless love, enduring trust;
His blessed and most wondrous bride.
I wondered, marveled, marveled much;
Was she of Western growth? Was she
Of Saxon blood, that wife with such
Eternal truth and constancy?

I could not rest until I knew.
"Now, twenty years, my man," I said,
"Is a long time." He turned, he drew
A pistol forth, also a sigh.
"'Tis twenty years or more," sighed he.
"Nay, nay, my honest man, I vow
I do not doubt that this may be;
But tell, oh, tell me truly how?

"'Twould make a poem pure and grand;
All time should note it near and far;

And thy fair, virgin, gold-sown land
 Should stand out like some winter star.
 America should heed. And then
 The doubtful French beyond the sea—
 'Twould make them truer, nobler men
 To know how this might truly be."

"'Tis twenty year or more," urged he;
 "Nay, that I know, good guide of mine;
 But lead me where this wife may be,
 And I a pilgrim at a shrine,
 And kneeling as a pilgrim true—"
 He, leaning, shouted loud and clear:
 "I cannot show my wife to you;
 She's dead this more than twenty year."

DOCTORS' WIT AND HUMOR

"ELI PERKINS"

I love the doctor for his negative qualities; not for medicating us, but for his skilfully administered bread pills. I love him for his diplomatic way of making us believe he's doctored us when he hasn't—for the best doctors now take off their hats to Dr. Nature, and let him do what they used to do with physic.

Speaking of negative doctoring reminds me of how General Sheridan defended Dr. Bliss. Dr. Bliss, you know, was the man who cured President Garfield—that is, cured him as Dr. Mackenzie did the German Emperor—cured him till he died.

One day, when they were criticizing Dr. Bliss, General Sheridan came to the doctor's defense.

"Dr. Bliss was a good physician," said General Sheridan; "he saved my life once."

"How? How did Bliss save your life?" asked Dr. Hammond.

"Well," said Sheridan, "I was very sick in the hospital after the battle of Winchester. One day they sent for Dr. Agnew, of Philadelphia, and he gave me some medicine, but I kept getting worse. Then they sent for Dr. Frank Hamilton, and he gave me some more medicine, but I grew worse and worse. Then they sent for Dr. Bliss, and——"

"And you still grew worse?"

"No, Dr. Bliss didn't come; *he saved my life!*"

The mystery about medicines and the obscurity of professional terms throw a romance about the doctor.

One day I fell out of a third story window onto a picket fence. When I asked Dr. Hammond if I would die, or recover, he looked at my tongue and said he "thought I would."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because," said he, "on general principles, Mr. Perkins, whenever a patient's esophagus becomes hyperemic through the inordinate use of *spiritus vini rectificati*, causing hepatic cirrhosis, the reverse holds true; in other cases it does not."

Then he put some water in two tumblers, and said:

"Idiosyncrasy, Mr. Perkins, is not superinduced by the patient's membranous outer cuticle becoming homogeneous with his transmagnifibanduality."

Sez I, "Doctor, I think so, too."

My doctor, Dr. Hammond, is a great doctor. He can cure anything. He can cure cholera or smallpox, or hams or bacon.

One day I cut my toe off with an ax. When I called in Dr. Hammond to prescribe for me, he said he thought I had tic doloro, and then he prescribed bleeding, and bled me out of seventeen dollars. That was the dolor; and when he wanted his pay, I told him to charge it, and that was the tic; and I still owe it to him, and that is the "o."

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Two very curious incidents occurred to me recently—all through the mystification of terms. The newspapers nowadays are full of Italian murders and New Orleans assassinations, and any one whose name ends with an i, like Martinelli, or Morelli, is looked upon with suspicion. So when I was a little ill the other morning, and our Irish butler wondered what was the matter, I said:

"I think, Dennis, that it was that Italian *macaroni spaghetti* that hurt me."

"That Eyetalyun Spaghetti!" exclaimed Dennis. "Faith, and thim bloody Eyetalyuns will hurt annyone."

Later in the day I stepped up to my regular Irish newsdealer to get the morning papers. The old Irishman looked me in the face, and seeing that I looked a little pale, remarked:

"Yez don't look well this morning, Mr. Perkins. Have ye been sick?"

"Well," said I, looking very serious, "I was laid out last week by an attack of peritonitis."

"Attacked by Purtinitist, eh," exclaimed the old man, looking a great deal mixed up mentally. Then, after a moment's pause, and in a very indignant tone, he exclaimed:

"Puritinitist! Why didn't you dhraw your gun and shoot the Eyetalyun blaggard through the heart?"

A cautious doctor will always sit still and let his patient talk, and in a few moments he will know all about his disease. But they tell a story about Dr. Munson, of Baltimore, who was always "too previous." He would glance

at a patient and pompously sum up his case in an instant, often making mistakes.

One afternoon a tired-looking man called and asked for treatment. The doctor looked at his tongue, felt of his pulse, knocked on his chest, and began:

"Same old story, my friend. Men can't live without fresh air. No use trying it. I could make myself a corpse, like you are doing by degrees, if I sat down in my office and didn't stir. You must have fresh air; you must take long walks, and brace up by staying out doors. Now I could make a drug-store of you, and you would think I was a smart man, but my advice to you is to walk, walk, walk."

"But, doctor——"

"That's right. Argue the question. That's my reward. Of course you know all about my business. Now, will you take my advice? Take long walks every day, several times a day, and get your blood in circulation."

"I do walk, doctor. I——"

"Of course you do walk. I know that; but walk more. Walk ten times as much as you do now. That will cure you."

"But my business——"

"Of course, your business prevents it. Change your business, so that you have to walk more. What is your business?"

"I'm a letter-carrier."

"My friend," said the doctor, almost paralyzed, "permit me to once more examine your tongue." And then he handed him a box of pills, with directions to take "one pill five times a day."

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Doctors often say their fees are high because so many patients fail to pay their honest bills. To collect these bills doctors often have to resort to the courts. A queer *medico-legal* case came up recently in Chicago. Dr. Barker sued an Irishman for five dollars for professional services attending his wife. He proved his claim by competent witnesses—proved that he had made the visits, and there seemed to be no chance for the Irishman to get out of paying the bill. But after admitting the visits the Irishman begged the privilege of cross-examining the doctor.

"Docthor," he commenced, "you remimber when I called on you?"

"I do, sir."

"What did I soy?"

"You said your wife was sick, and you wished me to go and see her."

"What did you soy thin?"

"I said I would if you'd pay me my fee."

"What did I soy?"

"You said you'd pay the fee, if you knew what it was."

"What did you soy?"

"I said I'd take five dollars at first, and maybe more in the end, according to the sickness."

"Now, docthor, by vartue of your oath, didn't I soy 'Kill or cure, docthor, I'll give you the five dollars.' And didn't you soy, 'Kill or cure, I'll take it?'"

"I did; and I agreed to the bargain, and want the money accordingly," said Dr. Barker.

"Now, docthor,* by vartue of your oath, answer this: 'Did you cure me wife?'"

"No; she's dead. You know that."

"Now, docthor, by vartue of your oath, answer this: 'Did you kill me wife?'"

"No; she died of her illness."

"Your Worship," said the Irishman, turning to the judge, "you see this. You heard him tell our bargain. It was to kill or cure. By vartue of his oath he done nayther, and he axes the fee!"

The Irishman lost his case, however. He was not so successful as farmer Bennett—old Peter Bennett, of Georgia. Old Peter was a plain old farmer, but he was a good talker. It seems that the old man's wife had a sore limb, and he employed Dr. Mason to cure it, but never paid him for his services. Now, Dr. Mason was a very noted and a very learned man; and to add to this, he employed Bob Toombs to prosecute the case. It was a great case in Georgia, "Old Peter Bennett *vs.* Dr. Mason," and the reputation of Toombs brought out a courthouse full of people.

Well, Toombs made a strong speech. He didn't leave a ghost of a chance for old Peter. However, just before the decision was to be made, old Peter arose, and said:

"Jedge, moight I say suthin' in this case?"

"Certainly," said the judge.

"Wall, gentlemen of the jury," began old Peter, depositing a chew of tobacco in the corner, "I ain't no lawyer and no doctor, and you ain't nuther; and if we farmers don't stick together, these here lawyers and doctors will

get the advantage of us. I ain't no objections to lawyers and doctors in their place, and some is clever men, but they ain't farmers, gentlemen of the jury. Now this Dr. Mason was a new doctor, and I sent for him to come and doctor my wife's sore leg. And he did, and put some salve truck on it, and some rags, but it never done a bit of good, gentlemen of the jury. I don't believe he's no doctor, no way. There's doctors as I know is doctors, sure enough; but this ain't no doctor at all."

Old Peter was making headway with the jury, when Dr. Mason said, "Here is my diploma."

"His diploma," said Bennett, with great contempt; "that ain't nothin', for no piece of paper ever made a doctor yet."

"Ask my patients," yelled the now thoroughly enraged physician.

"Ask your patients," slowly repeated Bennett; and then, deliberating, "Ask your patients! Why, they are all dead. Ask your patients! Why, I should have to hunt them in the lonely graveyards, and rap on the silent tomb to get answers from the dead. You know they can't say nothing to this case, for you've killed 'em all."

Loud was the applause, and old Peter Bennett won his case.

THE FAIRS

JOHN HAY

With the long days and cooler air of the autumn begin the different fairs. These are relics of the times of tyranny and exclusive privilege, when for a few days each year, by the intervention of the Church, or as a reward for civic service, full liberty of barter and sale was allowed to all citizens. This custom, more or less modified, may be found in most cities of Europe. The boulevards of Paris swarm with little booths at Christmas time, which begin and end their lawless commercial life within the week. In Vienna, in Leipsic, and other cities, the same waste-weir of irregular trade is periodically opened. These fairs begin in Madrid with the autumnal equinox, and continue for some weeks in October. They disappear from the Alcalá to break out with renewed virulence in the avenue of Atocha, and girdle the city at last with a belt of booths. While they last they give great animation and spirit to the street life of the town. You can scarcely make your way among the heaps of gaudy shawls and handkerchiefs, cheap laces and illegitimate jewels, that cumber the pavement. When the Jews were driven out of Spain, they left behind the true genius of bargaining. A nut-brown maid is attracted by a brilliant red-and-yellow scarf. She asks the sleepy merchant nodding before his wares, "What is this rag worth?" He answers with profound indifference, "Ten reals."

"Hombre! Are you dreaming or crazy?" She drops the coveted neck gear, and moves on apparently horror-stricken.

The chapman calls her back peremptorily: "Don't be rash! The scarf is worth twenty reals, but for the sake of Santisima Maria I offered it to you for half price. Very well! You are not suited. What will you give?"

"Caramba! Am I buyer and seller as well? The thing is worth three reals; more is a robbery."

"Jesus! Maria! José! and all the family! Go thou with God! We cannot trade. Sooner than sell for less than eight reals I will raise the cover of my brains! Go thou! It is eight of the morning, and still thou dreamest."

She lays down the scarf reluctantly, saying, "Five?" But the outraged mercer snorts scornfully, "Eight is my last word! Go to!"

She moves away, thinking how well that scarf would look in the Apollo Gardens, and casts over her shoulder a Parthian glance and bids "Six!"

"Take it! It is madness, but I cannot waste my time in bargaining."

Both congratulate themselves on the operation. He would have taken five, and she would have given seven. How trade would suffer if we had windows in our breasts!

The first days of November are consecrated to all the saints and to the souls of all the blessed dead. They are observed in Spain with great solemnity; but as the cemeteries are generally of the dreariest character, bare, bleak, and most forbidding under the ashen sky

of the late autumn, the days are deprived of that exquisite sentiment that pervades them in countries where the graves of the dead are beautiful. There is nothing more touching than these offerings of memory you see every year in Mont Parnasse and Père-la-Chaise. Apart from all beliefs, there is a mysterious influence for good exerted upon the living by the memory of the beloved dead. On all hearts not utterly corrupt, the thoughts that come by the graves of the departed fall like dew from heaven, and quicken into life purer and higher resolves.

In Spain, where there is nothing but desolation in graveyards, the churches are crowded instead, and the bereaved survivors commend to God their departed friends and their own stricken hearts in the dim and perfumed aisles of temples made with hands. A taint of gloom thus rests upon the recollection and the prayer, far different from the consolation that comes with the free air and the sunshine, and the infinite blue vault, where Nature conspires with revelation to comfort and cherish and console.

Christmas apparently comes in Spain on no other mission than that referred to in the old English couplet, "bringing good cheer." The Spaniards are the most frugal of people, but during the days that precede their Noche Buena, their Good Night, they seem to be given up as completely to cares of the commissariat as the most eupeptic of Germans. Swarms of turkeys are driven in from the surrounding country, and taken about the streets by their

rustic herdsmen, making the roads gay with their scarlet wattles, and waking rural memories by their vociferous gobbling. The great market-place of the season is the Plaza Mayor. The ever-fruitful provinces of the south are laid under contribution, and the result is a wasteful show of tropical luxuriance that seems most incongruous under the wintry sky. There are mountains of oranges and dates, brown hillocks of nuts of every kind, stores of every product of this versatile soil. The air is filled with nutty and fruity fragrance. Under the ancient arcades are the stalls of the butchers, rich with the mutton of Castile, the hams of Estremadura, and the hero-nourishing bull beef of Andalusian pastures.

At night the town is given up to harmless racket. Nowhere has the tradition of the Latin Saturnalia been fitted with less change into the Christian calendar. Men, women, and children of the proletariat—the unemancipated slaves of necessity—go out this night to cheat their misery with noisy frolic. The owner of a tambourine is the equal of a peer; the proprietor of a guitar is the captain of his hundred. They troop through the dim city with discordant revel and song. They have little idea of music. Every one sings, and sings ill. Every one dances, without grace or measure. Their music is a modulated howl of the East. Their dancing is the savage leaping of barbarians. There is no lack of couplets, religious, political, or amatory. I heard one ragged woman with a brown baby at her breast go shrieking through the Street of the Magdalen.

"This is the eve of Christmas,
 No sleep from now till morn;
 The Virgin is in travail,
 At twelve will the child be born!"

Behind her stumped a crippled beggar, who
 croaked in a voice rough with frost and *aguar-
 diente* his deep disillusion and distrust of the
 great:

"This is the eve of Christmas,
 But what is that to me?
 We are ruled by thieves and robbers,
 As it was and will always be."

Next comes a shouting band of the youth of
 Spain, strapping boys with bushy locks, crisp
 and black almost to blueness, and gay young
 girls with flexible forms and dark Arab eyes
 that shine with a phosphorescent light in the
 shadows. They troop on with clacking casta-
 nets. The challenge of the *mozos* ring out on
 the frosty air,

"This is the eve of Christmas,
 Let us drink, and love our fill!"

And the saucy antiphon of girlish voices re-
 sponds,

"A man may be bearded and gray,
 But a woman can fool him still!"

The Christmas and New Year's holidays con-
 tinue for a fortnight, ending with the Epiphany.
 On the eve of the Day of the Kings a curious
 farce is performed by bands of the lowest

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orders of the people, which demonstrates the apparently endless naïveté of their class. In every coterie of water-carriers, or *mozos de cordel*, there will be one found innocent enough to believe that the Magi are coming to Madrid that night, and that a proper respect to their rank requires that they must be met at the city gate. To perceive the coming of their feet, beautiful upon the mountains, a ladder is necessary, and the poor victim of the comedy is loaded with this indispensable "property." He is dragged by his gay companions, who never tire of the exquisite wit of their jest, from one gate to another, until suspicion supplants faith in the mind of the neophyte, and the farce is over.

In the burgher society of Castile this night is devoted to a very different ceremony. Each little social circle comes together in a house agreed upon. They take mottoes of gilded paper and write on each the name of some one of the company. The names of the ladies are thrown into one urn, and those of the cavaliers into another, and they are drawn out by pairs. These couples are thus condemned by fortune to intimacy during the year. The gentleman is always to be at the orders of the dame and to serve her faithfully in every knightly fashion. He has all the duties and none of the privileges of a lover, unless it be the joy of those "who stand and wait." The relation is very like that which so astonished M. de Gramont in his visit to Piedmont, where the cavalier of service never left his mistress in public and never approached her in private.

The true Carnival survives in its naive purity only in Spain. It has faded in Rome into a romping day of clown's play. In Paris it is little more than a busier season for dreary and professional vice. Elsewhere all over the world the Carnival gaieties are confined to the salon. But in Madrid the whole city, from grandee to cordwainer, goes with childlike earnestness into the enjoyment of the hour. The Corso begins in the Prado on the last Sunday before Lent, and lasts four days. From noon to night the great drive is filled with a double line of carriages two miles long, and between them are the landaus of the favored hundreds who have the privilege of driving up and down free from the law of the road. This right is acquired by the payment of ten dollars a day to city charities, and produces some fifteen thousand dollars every Carnival. In these carriages all the society of Madrid may be seen; and on foot, darting in and out among the hoofs of the horses, are the young men of Castile in every conceivable variety of absurd and fantastic disguise. There are, of course, pirates and Indians and Turks, monks, prophets, and kings, but the favorite costumes seem to be the Devil and the Englishman. Sometimes the Yankee is attempted, with indifferent success. He wears a ribbon-wreathed Italian bandit's hat, an embroidered jacket, slashed buckskin trousers, and a wide crimson belt—a dress you would at once recognize as universal in Boston.

Most of the maskers know, by name, at least, the occupants of the carriages. There is always room for a mask in a coach. They leap

in, swarming over the back or the sides, and in their shrill monotonous scream they make the most startling revelations of the inmost secrets of your soul. There is always something impressive in the talk of an unknown voice, but especially is this so in Madrid, where every one scorns his own business, and devotes himself rigorously to his neighbor's. These shrieking young monks and devilkins often surprise a half-formed thought in the heart of a fair Castilian and drag it out into day and derision. No one has the right to be offended. Duchesses are called Tu! Isabel! by chin-dimpled schoolboys, and the proudest beauties in Spain accept bonbons from plebeian hands. It is true, most of the maskers are of the better class. Some of the costumes are very rich and expensive, of satin and velvet heavy with gold. I have seen a distinguished diplomatist in the guise of a gigantic canary-bird, hopping briskly about in the mud with bedraggled tail-feathers, shrieking well-bred sarcasms with his yellow beak.

The charm of the Madrid Carnival is this, that it is respected and believed in. The best and fairest pass the day in the Corso, and gallant young gentlemen think it worth while to dress elaborately for a few hours of harmless and *spirituelle* intrigue. A society that enjoys a holiday so thoroughly has something in it better than the blasé cynicism of more civilized capitals. These young fellows talk like the lovers of the old romances. I have never heard prettier periods of devotion than from some gentle savage, stretched out on the front seat

of a landau under the peering eyes of his lady, safe in his 'disguise if not self-betrayed, pouring out his young soul in passionate praise and prayer; around them the laughter and the cries, the cracking of whips, the roll of wheels, the presence of countless thousands, and yet these two young hearts alone under the pale winter sky. The rest of the Continent has outgrown the true Carnival. It is pleasant to see this gay relic of simpler times, when youth was young. No one here is too "swell" for it. You may find a duke in the disguise of a chimney-sweep, or a butcher-boy in the dress of a crusader. There are none so great that their dignity would suffer by a day's reckless foolery, and there are none so poor that they cannot take the price of a dinner to buy a mask and cheat their misery by mingling for a time with their betters in the wild license of the Carnival.

The winter's gaiety dies hard. Ash Wednesday is a day of loud merriment, and is devoted to a popular ceremony called the Burial of the Sardine. A vast throng of working men carry with great pomp a link of sausage to the bank of the Manzanares and inter it there with great solemnity. On the following Saturday, after three days of death, the Carnival has a resurrection, and the maddest, wildest ball of the year takes place at the Opera. Then the sackcloth and ashes of Lent come down in good earnest, and the town mourns over its scarlet sins. It used to be very fashionable for the genteel Christians to repair during this season of mortification to the Church of San Gines, and scourge themselves lustily in its

subterranean chambers. A still more striking demonstration was for gentlemen in love to lash themselves on the sidewalks where passed the ladies of their thoughts. If the blood from the scourges sprinkled them as they sailed by, it was thought an attention no female heart could withstand. But these wholesome customs have decayed of late unbelieving years.

The Lenten piety increases with the lengthening days. It reaches its climax on Holy Thursday. On this day all Spain goes to church; it is one of the obligatory days. The more you go, the better for you; so the good people spend the whole day from dawn to dusk roaming from one church to another, and investing an Ave and a Paternoster in each. This fills every street of the city with the pious crowd. No carriages are permitted. A silence like that of Venice falls on the rattling capital. With three hundred thousand people in the street, the town seems still. In 1870, a free-thinking cabman dared to drive up the Calle Alcalà. He was dragged from his box and beaten half to death by the chastened mourners, who yelled as they kicked and cuffed him, "*Que bruto! He will wake our Jesus.*"

THE SOCIETY UPON THE STANISLAUS

BRET HARTE

I reside at Table Mountain, and my name is
Truthful James;

I am not up to small deceit, or any sinful
games;

And I'll tell in simple language what I know
about the row

That broke up our Society upon the Stanislaw.

But first I would remark, that it is not a
proper plan

For any scientific gent to whale his fellow man,
And, if a member don't agree with his peculiar
whim,

To lay for that same member for to "put a
head" on him.

Now, nothing could be finer or more beautiful
to see

Than the first six months' proceedings of that
same society,

Till Brown of Calaveras brought a lot of fossil
bones

That he found within a tunnel near the tene-
ment of Jones.

Then Brown he read a paper, and he recon-
structed there,

From those same bones an animal that was
extremely rare,

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And Jones then asked the chair for a suspension of the rules,
Till he could prove that those same bones was
one of his lost mules.

Then Brown he smiled a bitter smile, and said
he was at fault;
It seemed he had been trespassing on Jones's
family vault;
He was a most sarcastic man, this quiet Mr.
Brown,
And on several occasions he had cleaned out
the town.

Now, I hold it is not decent for a scientific
gent
To say another is an ass—at least, to all
intent;
Nor should the individual who happens to be
meant
Reply by heaving rocks at him to any great
extent.

Then Abner Dean of Angel's raised a point of
order—when
A chunk of old red sandstone took him in the
abdomen,
And he smiled a kind of sickly smile, and
curled up on the floor,
And the subsequent proceedings interested him
no more.

For, in less time than I write it, every member
did engage
In a warfare with the remnants of a paleozoic
age;

And the way they heaved those fossils in their
anger was a sin,
Till the skull of an old mammoth caved the
head of Thompson in.

And this is all I have to say of these improper
games,
For I live at Table Mountain, and my name is
Truthful James;
And I've told in simple language what I know
about the row
That broke up our Society upon the Stanislow.

TO THE PLIOCENE SKULL

A GEOLOGICAL ADDRESS

"Speak, Oh, man, less recent! Fragment fossil!
Primal pioneer of pliocene formation,
Hid in lowest drifts below the earliest
stratum

Of volcanic tufa!

"Older than the beasts, the oldest Palæother-
ium;

Older than the trees, the oldest Cryptogamy;
Older than the hills, those infantile eruptions
Of earth's epidermis!

"Eo—Mio—Plio—whatsoe'er the 'cene' was
That those vacant sockets filled with awe and
wonder—

Whether shores Devonian or Silurian beaches
Tell us thy strange story!

"Or has the professor slightly antedated
By some thousand years thy advent on this
planet,

Giving thee an air that's somewhat better
fitted

For cold-blooded creatures?

"Wert thou true spectator of that mighty forest
When above thy head the stately Sigillaria
Reared its columned trunks in that remote
and distant

Carboniferous epoch?

"Tell us of that scene—the dim and watery
 woodland
 Songless, silent, hushed, with never bird or
 insect,
 Veiled with spreading fronds and screened
 with tall club-mosses,
 Lycopodiaceæ—

"When beside thee walked the solemn Plesio-
 saurus,
 And around thee crept the festive Ichthyo-
 saurus,
 While from time to time above thee flew and
 circled
 Cheerful Pterodactyls.

"Tell us of thy food—those half-marine refec-
 tions,
 Crinoids on the shell and Brachiopods *au*
naturel—
 Cuttlefish to which the *pieuvre* of Victor Hugo
 Seems a periwinkle.

"Speak, thou awful vestige of the Earth's cre-
 ation—
 Solitary fragment of remains organic!
 Tell the wondrous secret of thy past exist-
 ence—
 Speak! thou oldest primate!"

Even as I gazed, a thrill of the maxilla,
 And a lateral movement of the condyloid
 process,
 With post-pliocene sounds of healthy mastica-
 tion,
 Ground the teeth together.

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And, from that imperfect dental exhibition,
Stained with expressed juices of the weed
Nicotian,
Came these hollow accents, blent with softer
murmurs
Of expectoration:

"Which my name is Bowers, and my crust was
busted
Falling down a shaft in Calaveras County,
But I'd take it kindly if you'd send the pieces
Home to old Missouri!"

HER LETTER

BRET HARTE

I'm sitting alone by the fire,
 Dressed just as I came from the dance,
 In a robe even *you* would admire—
 It cost a cool thousand in France;
 I'm be-diamonded out of all reason,
 My hair is done up in a cue:
 In short, sir, "the belle of the season"
 Is wasting an hour on you.

A dozen engagements I've broken;
 I left in the midst of a set;
 Likewise a proposal, half-spoken,
 That waits—on the stairs—for me yet.
 They say he'll be rich—when he grows up—
 And then he adores me indeed.
 And you, sir, are turning your nose up,
 Three thousand miles off, as you read.

"And how do I like my position?"
 "And what do I think of New York?"
 "And now, in my higher ambition,
 With whom do I waltz, flirt, or talk?"
 "And isn't it nice to have riches,
 And diamonds and silks, and all that?"
 "And isn't it a change to the ditches
 And tunnels of Poverty Flat?"

Well, yes—if you saw us out driving
 Each day in the Park, four-in-hand—

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If you saw poor dear mama contriving
To look supernaturally grand—
If you saw papa's picture, as taken
By Brady, and tinted at that—
You'd never suspect he sold bacon
And flour at Poverty Flat.

And yet, just this moment, when sitting
In the glare of the grand chandelier—
In the bustle and glitter befitting
The "finest *soirée* of the year"—
In the mists of a *gaze de Chambéry*,
And the hum of the smallest of talk—
Somehow, Joe, I thought of the "Ferry,"
And the dance that we had on "The Fork";

Of Harrison's barn, with its muster
Of flags festooned over the wall;
Of the candles that shed their soft luster
And tallow on head-dress and shawl;
Of the steps that we took to one fiddle;
Of the dress of my queer *vis-à-vis*,
And how I once went down the middle
With the man that shot Sandy McGee;

Of the moon that was quietly sleeping
On the hill, when the time came to go;
Of the few baby peaks that were peeping
From under their bedclothes of snow;
Of that ride—that to me was the rarest;
Of—the something you said at the gate.
Ah, Joe, then I wasn't an heiress
To "the best-paying lead in the State!"

Well, well, it's all past; yet it's funny
To think, as I stood in the glare

Of fashion and beauty and money,
 That I should be thinking, right there,
 Of some one who breasted high water,
 And swam the North Fork, and all that,
 Just to dance with old Folinsbee's daughter,
 The Lily of Poverty Flat.

But goodness! what nonsense I'm writing!
 (Mama says my taste still is low),
 Instead of my triumphs reciting,
 I'm spooning on Joseph—heigh-ho!
 And I'm to be "finished" by travel—
 Whatever's the meaning of that—
 Oh! why did papa strike pay gravel
 In drifting on Poverty Flat?

Good-night—here's the end of my paper;
 Good-night—if the longitude please—
 For maybe, while wasting my taper,
Your sun's climbing over the trees.
 But know, if you haven't got riches,
 And are poor, dearest Joe, and all that,
 That my heart's somewhere there in the
 ditches,
 And you've struck it—on Poverty Flat.

PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHEUL JAMES;
OR, THE HEATHEN CHINEE

BRET HARTE

Which I wish to remark—
And my language is plain—
That for ways that are dark,
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name,
And I shall not deny
In regard to the same
What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand;
It was euchre—the same
He did not understand;
But he smiled as he sat by the table
With the smile that was childlike and
bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
At the state of Nye's sleeve,

Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made
Were quite frightful to see,
Till at last he put down a right bower,
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,
And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor;"
And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding
In the game that "he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
He had twenty-four packs,
Which was coming it strong,
Yet I state but the facts.
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapers—that's wax.

Which is why I remark—
And my language is plain—
That for ways that are dark,
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
Which the same I am free to maintain.

AN UNNECESSARY INVENTION

WILLIAM L. ALDEN

Few people have any accurate idea of the immense number of ingenious inventions that are annually patented at Washington. It is creditable to the inventors that for the most part these inventions are intended to serve some really useful end and to meet some obvious want. Nevertheless, there are inventors who appear to have more desire to display their ingenuity than to accomplish any public benefit. Such inventors are akin in spirit to those captious persons who decline to rent a room or an office unless it possesses facilities for swinging a cat, although they have not the remotest intention of ever performing that exciting but frivolous experiment. The Patent Office contains numerous models of machines framed with the utmost skill, but intended for purposes for which no man will ever desire to employ them, or which are hostile to the best interests of the community. We may admire the ingenuity of these machines, but at the same time we must regret that the inventors have wasted or perverted their abilities.

It is to this latter class of inventions that the recently patented "Smith Rolling and Crushing Machine" undoubtedly belongs—unless, indeed, the nature and object of the invention have been grossly misrepresented. As its name implies, it is obviously intended for diminishing

the number of Smiths. It is understood that it consists of a series of heavy rollers resembling those by which iron plates are rolled, and also of a pair of gigantic grindstones of novel pattern and enormous power, the whole being set in motion by a 12-horse-power engine. Its method of operation is at once simple and effective. The operator takes a Smith of any size, and, adjusting the gear of the rollers to the exact width to which it is desired to roll the Smith, gently inserts his head between the rollers. The machine is then set in motion, and in the brief space of fifty-eight seconds the Smith is rolled to any desirable degree of thinness. If a Smith is to be crushed, he is placed in a hopper communicating with the grindstones, and after a rapid trituration, varying from two minutes to five minutes, according to the size and toughness of the Smith, he is reduced to a fine and evenly ground powder, in which such foreign substances as buttons or shirt-studs can be detected only by the most delicate chemical tests. The inventor, so it is said, claims that by a very simple mechanical attachment the machine can be made to roll or crush Smythes and Schmidts with equal efficiency, and he is confident that the general principle underlying his invention can be applied to Brown-crushing or Robinson-rolling machines.

Now we may fully appreciate the ingenuity displayed in the conception of the Smith roller and crusher, and the skill with which that conception has been embodied in iron and grindstones. A grave objection, however, can be

urged against the invention, and that is that there is no evidence of any existing demand for such a machine. That there is a large quantity of Smiths, not to speak of Smythes and Schmidts, in this country is undeniable. There is, however, no proof that the volume of Smiths is more than commensurate with the necessities of business. It may be conceded that, at certain times and in certain limited localities, there is an excess of Smiths. A plethora of Smiths in one place, however, implies a corresponding paucity of Smiths in another, and the difficulty soon regulates itself. It may be confidently asserted that the great law of supply and demand can be trusted to preserve the balance of Smiths from any serious disturbance. Hence it is sufficiently plain that there is no need of a sudden contraction of the volume of Smiths, and that the Smith roller and crusher is wholly superfluous.

There is still another objection to the machine which is, at least, as serious as that already suggested. No one will deny that, were it desired to contract the volume of Smiths by a certain definite number every week or month, the Smith roller and crusher would accomplish that end with thoroughness and success. A Smith when once rolled to the uniform thinness of a quarter of an inch, or crushed to the fineness of ground coffee, would be of no further use as a Smith. But why employ costly machinery to roll and crush Smiths, when they could be retired with equal efficiency in a dozen different and less expensive ways? The inventor has as yet made no sug-

gestion as to the possible uses to which a rolled Smith might be put; neither has he proposed any plan for the utilization of crushed Smiths. On the other hand, it is perfectly evident that one result of his process would be the financial ruin of the coffin-makers, who, as is well known, regard the Smiths as their most valuable clients. The more closely the invention is studied, the more plainly is it seen that it meets no real want, and that it proposes to do in an elaborate and costly way what might be done more simply and cheaply. It is an unpleasant task to say to an ingenious inventor, "You have wasted your labor and have produced what is at best only a curious scientific toy." This, however, must be the universal verdict upon the Smith roller and crusher. The rich and idle amateur of science may occasionally amuse himself by rolling or crushing Smiths in his private laboratory or workshop, but it is folly to suppose that the machine will ever come into general use, or that the inventor or the public will ever reap any decided benefit from it.

THE AMERICAN TRAVELER

ROBERT HENRY NEWELL

To Lake Aghmoogenegamook
 All in the State of Maine,
 A man from Wittequergaugum came
 One evening in the rain.

"I am a traveler," said he
 "Just started on a tour,
 And go to Nomjamskillicook
 Tomorrow morn at four."

He took a tavern bed that night,
 And, with the morrow's sun,
 By way of Sekledobskus went,
 With carpet-bag and gun.

A week passed on, and next we find
 Our native tourist come
 To that sequestered village called
 Genasagarnagum.

From thence he went to Absequoit.
 And there—quite tired of Maine—
 He sought the mountains of Vermont,
 Upon a railroad train.

Dog Hollow, in the Green Mount State,
 Was his first stopping-place;
 And then Skunk's Misery displayed
 Its sweetness and its grace.

By easy stages then he went
 To visit Devil's Den;
 And Scrabble Hollow, by the way
 Did come within his ken.

Then *via* Nine Holes and Goose Green
 He traveled through the State;
 And to Virginia, finally,
 Was guided by his fate.

Within the Old Dominion's bounds,
 He wandered up and down;
 Today at Buzzard's Roost ensconced,
 Tomorrow, at Hell Town.

At Pole Cat, too, he spent a week,
 Till friends from Bull Ring came
 And made him spend a day with them
 In hunting forest game.

Then, with his carpet-bag in hand,
 To Dog Town next he went;
 Though stopping at Free Negro Town,
 Where half a day he spent.

From thence, into Negationburg
 His route of travel lay;
 Which having gained, he left the State,
 And took a southward way.

North Carolina's friendly soil
 He trod at fall of night,
 And, on a bed of softest down,
 He slept at Hell's Delight.

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Morn found him on the road again,
To Lousy Level bound;
At Bull's Tail, and Lick Lizard, too,
Good provender he found.

The country all about Pinch Gut
So beautiful did seem
That the beholder thought it like
A picture in a dream.

But the plantations near Burnt Coat
Were even finer still,
And made the wondering tourist feel
A soft, delicious thrill.

At Tear Shirt, too, the scenery
Most charming did appear,
With Snatch It in the distance far,
And Purgatory near.

But, spite of all these pleasant scenes,
The tourist stoutly swore
That home is brightest, after all,
And travel is a bore.

So back he went to Maine, straightway;
A little wife he took;
And now is making nutmegs at
Moosehimagunticook.

PORTSMOUTH ORIGINALS AND THE RAILROAD

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

The running of the first train over the Eastern Road from Boston to Portsmouth—it took place somewhat more than forty years ago—was attended by a serious accident. The accident occurred in the crowded station at the Portsmouth terminus, and was unobserved at the time. The catastrophe was followed, though not immediately, by death, and that also, curiously enough, was unobserved. Nevertheless, this initial train, freighted with so many hopes and the directors of the road, ran over and killed—LOCAL CHARACTER.

Up to that day Portsmouth had been a very secluded little community, and had had the courage of its seclusion. From time to time it had calmly produced an individual built on plans and specifications of its own, without regard to the prejudices and conventionalities of outlying districts. This individual was purely indigenous. He was born in the town, he lived to a good old age in the town, and never went out of the place, until he was finally laid under it. To him, Boston, though only fifty-six miles away, was virtually an unknown quantity—only fifty-six miles by brutal geographical measurements, but thousands of miles distant in effect. In those days, in order to reach Boston you were obliged to take a great yellow, clumsy stage-coach, re-

sembling a three-story mud-turtle—if the zoologist will, for the sake of the simile, tolerate so daring an invention; you were obliged to take it very early in the morning, you dined at noon at Ipswich, and clattered into the great city with the golden dome just as the twilight was falling, provided always the coach had not shed a wheel by the roadside or one of the leaders had not gone lame. To many worthy and well-to-do persons in Portsmouth, this journey was an event which occurred only twice or thrice during life. To the typical individual with whom I am for the moment dealing, it never occurred at all. The town was his entire world; he was as parochial as a Parisian; Market Street was his Boulevard des Italiens, and the North End his Bois de Boulogne.

Of course there were varieties of local characters without his limitations: venerable merchants retired from the East India trade; elderly gentlewomen, with family jewels and personal peculiarities; one or two scholarly recluses in bygone cut of coat, haunting the Athenæum reading-room; ex-sea captains, with rings on their fingers, like Simon Danz's visitors in Longfellow's poem—men who had played busy parts in the bustling world, and had drifted back to Old Strawberry Bank in the tranquil sunset of their careers. I may say, in passing, that these ancient mariners, after battling with terrific hurricanes and typhoons on every known sea, not infrequently drowned themselves in pleasant weather in small sail-boats on the Piscataqua River. Old sea-dogs who had commanded ships of four or

five hundred tons had naturally slight respect for the potentialities of sail-boats twelve feet long. But there was to be no further increase of these odd sticks—if I may call them so, in no irreverent mood—after those innocent-looking parallel bars indissolubly linked Portsmouth with the capital of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All the conditions were to be changed, the old angles to be pared off, new horizons to be regarded. The individual, as an eccentric individual, was to undergo great modifications. If he were not to become extinct—a thing little likely—he was at least to lose his prominence.

However, as I have said, local character, in the sense in which the term is here used, was not instantly killed; it died a lingering death, and passed away so peacefully and silently as not to attract general, or perhaps any notice. This period of gradual dissolution fell during my boyhood. The last of the cocked hats had gone out, and the railway had come in, long before my time; but certain bits of color, certain half-obsolete customs and scraps of the past, were still left over. I was not too late, for example, to catch the last town crier—one Nicholas Newman, whom I used to contemplate with awe, and now recall with a sort of affection.

Nicholas Newman—Nicholas was a sobriquet, his real name being Edward—was a most estimable person, very short, cross-eyed, somewhat bow-legged, and with a bell out of all proportion to his stature. I have never since seen a bell of that size disconnected with a

church steeple. The only thing about him that matched the instrument of his office was his voice. His "Hear All!" still deafens memory's ear. I remember that he had a queer way of sidling up to one, as if Nature in shaping him had originally intended a crab, but thought better of it, and made a town crier. Of the crustacean intention only a moist thumb remained, which served Mr. Newman in good stead in the delivery of the Boston evening papers, for he was incidentally newsdealer. His authentic duties were to cry auctions, funerals, mislaid children, traveling theatricals, public meetings, and articles lost or found. He was especially strong in announcing the loss of reticules, usually the property of elderly maiden ladies. The unction with which he detailed the several contents, when fully confided to him, would have seemed satirical in another person, but on his part was pure conscientiousness. He would not let so much as a thimble, or a piece of wax, or a portable tooth, or any amiable vanity in the way of tonsorial device, escape him. I have heard Mr. Newman spoken of as "that horrid man." He was a picturesque figure.

Possibly it is because of his bell that I connect the town crier with those dolorous sounds which I used to hear rolling out of the steeple of the Old North every night at nine o'clock—the vocal remains of the colonial curfew. Nicholas Newman has passed on, perhaps crying his losses elsewhere, but this nightly tolling is still a custom. I can more satisfactorily explain why I associate with it a vastly dif-

ferent personality, that of Sol Holmes, the barber, for every night at nine o'clock his little shop on Congress Street was in full blast. Many a time at that hour I have flattened my nose on his window-glass. It was a gay little shop (he called it "an ~~Emporium~~,") as barber shops generally are, decorated with circus bills, tinted prints, and gaudy fly-catchers of tissue and gold paper. Sol Holmes (whose antecedents to us boys were wrapped in thrilling mystery—We imagined him to have been a prince in his native land) was a colored man, not too dark "for human nature's daily food," and enjoyed marked distinction as one of the few exotics in town. At this juncture the foreign element was at its minimum; every official, from selectman down to the Dogberry of the watch, bore a name that had been familiar to the town for a hundred years or so. The situation is greatly changed. I expect to live to see a Chinese policeman, with a sandal-wood club and a rice-paper pocket handkerchief, patrolling Congress Street.

Holmes was a handsome man, six feet or more in height, and as straight as a pine. He possessed his race's sweet temper, simplicity, and vanity. His martial bearing was a positive factor in the effectiveness of the Portsmouth Greys, whenever those bloodless warriors paraded. As he brought up the rear of the last platoon, with his infantry cap stuck jauntily on the left side of his head and a bright silver cup slung on a belt at his hip, he seemed to youthful eyes one of the most imposing things in the display. To himself he

was pretty much "all the company." He used to say, with a drollness which did not strike me until years afterward, "Boys, I and Cap'n Towle is goin' to trot out 'the Greys' tomorrah." Though strictly honest in all business dealings, his tropical imagination, whenever he strayed into the fenceless fields of autobiography, left much to be desired in the way of accuracy. Compared with Sol Holmes on such occasions, Ananias was a person of morbid integrity. Sol Holmes's tragic end was in singular contrast with his sunny temperament. One night, long ago, he threw himself from the deck of a Sound steamer, somewhere between Stonington and New York. What led or drove him to the act never transpired.

There are few men who were boys in Portsmouth at the period of which I write but will remember Wibird Penhallow and his sky-blue wheelbarrow. I find it difficult to describe him other than vaguely, possibly because Wibird had no expression whatever in his countenance. With his vacant white face lifted to the clouds, seemingly oblivious of everything, yet going with a sort of Heaven-given instinct straight to his destination, he trundled that rattling wheelbarrow for many a year over Portsmouth cobblestones. He was so unconscious of his environment that sometimes a small boy would pop into the empty wheelbarrow and secure a ride without Wibird arriving at any very clear knowledge of the fact. His employment in life was to deliver groceries and other merchandise to purchasers. This he did in a dreamy, impersonal kind of

way. It was as if a spirit had somehow got hold of an earthly wheelbarrow and was trundling it quite unconsciously, with no sense of responsibility. One day he appeared at a kitchen door with a two-gallon molasses jug, the top part of which was wanting. It was no longer a jug, but a tureen. When the recipient of the damaged article remonstrated with "Goodness gracious, Wibird! you have broken the jug," his features lighted up, and he seemed immensely relieved. "I thought," he remarked, "I heard somethink crack!"

Wibird Penhallow's heaviest patron was the keeper of a variety store, and the first specimen of a pessimist I ever encountered. He was an excellent specimen. He took exception to everything. He objected to the telegraph, to the railway, to steam in all its applications. Some of his arguments, I recollect, made a deep impression on my mind. "Nowadays," he once observed to me, "if your son or your grandfather drops dead at the other end of creation, you know of it in ten minutes. What's the use? Unless you are *anxious* to know he's dead, you've got just two or three weeks more to be miserable in." He scorned the whole business, and was faithful to his scorn. When he received a telegram, which was rarely, he made a point of keeping it awhile unopened. Through the exercise of this whim he once missed an opportunity of buying certain goods to great advantage. "There!" he exclaimed, "if the telegraph hadn't been invented, the idiot would have written to me, and I'd have sent a letter by return coach, and got the goods

before he found out prices had gone up in Chicago. If that boy brings me another of those tapeworm telegraphs, I'll throw an ax-handle at him." His pessimism extended up, or down, to generally recognized canons of orthography. They were all iniquitous. If k-n-i-f-e spelled knife, then, he contended, k-n-i-f-e-s was the plural. Diverting tags, written by his own hand in conformity with this theory, were always attached to articles in his shop-window. He is long since *ded*, as he himself would have put it, but his phonetic theory appears to have survived him in crankish brains here and there. As my discouraging old friend was not exactly a public character, like the town crier or Wibird Penhallow, I have intentionally thrown a veil over his identity. I have, so to speak, dropped into his pouch a grain or two of that magical fern-seed which was supposed by our English ancestors, in Elizabeth's reign, to possess the quality of rendering a man invisible.

Another person who singularly interested me at this epoch was a person with whom I had never exchanged a word, whose voice I had never heard, but whose face was as familiar to me as every day could make it. For each morning as I went to school, and each afternoon as I returned, I saw this face peering out of a window in the second story of a shambling yellow house situated in Washington Street, not far from the corner of State. Whether some malign disease had fixed him to the chair he sat on, or whether he had lost the use of his legs, or, possibly, had none (the upper part

of him was that of a man in admirable health), presented a problem which, with that curious *insouciance* of youth, I made no attempt to solve. It was an established fact, however, that he never went out of that house. I cannot vouch so confidently for the cobwebby legend which wove itself about him. It was to this effect: He had formerly been the master of a large merchantman running between New York and Calcutta; while still in his prime he had abruptly retired from the quarter-deck, and seated himself at that window—where the outlook must have been the reverse of exhilarating, for not ten persons passed in the course of the day, and the hurried jingle of the bells on Parry's bakery-cart was the only sound that ever shattered the silence. Whether it was an amatory or financial disappointment that turned him into a hermit was left to ingenious conjecture. But there he sat, year in and year out, with his cheek so close to the window that the nearest pane became permanently blurred with his breath; for after his demise the blur remained.

In this Arcadian era it was possible, in provincial places, for an undertaker to assume the dimensions of a personage. There was a sexton in Portsmouth—his name escapes me, but his attributes do not—whose impressiveness made him own brother to the massive architecture of the Stone Church. On every solemn occasion he was the striking figure, even to the eclipsing of the involuntary object of the ceremony. His occasions, happily, were not exclusively solemn; he added to his other

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public services that of furnishing ice cream for evening parties. I always thought—perhaps it was the working of an unchastened imagination—that he managed to throw into his ice cream a peculiar chill not attained by either Dunyon or Peduzzi—*arcades ambo*—the rival confectioners.

Perhaps I should not say rival, for Mr. Dunyon kept a species of restaurant, while Mr. Peduzzi restricted himself to preparing confections to be discussed elsewhere than on his premises. Both gentlemen achieved great popularity in their respective lines, but neither offered to the juvenile population quite the charm of those prim, white-capped old ladies who presided over certain snuffy little shops, occurring unexpectedly in silent side-streets where the footfall of commerce seemed an incongruous thing. These shops were never intended in nature. They had an impromptu and abnormal air about them. I do not recall one that was not located in a private residence, and was not evidently the despairing expedient of some pathetic financial crisis, similar to that which overtook Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon in "The House of the Seven Gables." The horizontally divided street-door—the upper section left open in summer—ushered you, with a sudden jangle of bell that turned your heart over, into a strictly private hall, haunted by the delayed aroma of thousands of family dinners. Thence, through another door, you passed into what had formerly been the front parlor, but was now a shop, with a narrow, brown wooden counter, and several rows of

little drawers built up against the picture-papered wall behind it. Through much use the paint on these drawers was worn off in circles round the polished brass knobs. Here was stored almost every small article required by humanity, from an inflamed emery cushion to a peppermint Gibraltar—the latter a kind of adamantine confectionery which, when I reflect upon it, raises in me the wonder that any Portsmouth boy or girl ever reached the age of fifteen with a single tooth left unbroken. The proprietors of these little knick-knack establishments were the nicest creatures, somehow suggesting venerable doves. They were always aged ladies, sometimes spinsters, sometimes relicts of daring mariners, beached long before. They always wore crisp muslin caps and steel-rimmed spectacles; they were not always amiable, and no wonder, for even doves may have their rheumatism; but such as they were, they were cherished in young hearts, and are, I take it, impossible today.

When I look back to Portsmouth as I knew it, it occurs to me that it must have been in some respects unique among New England towns. There were, for instance, no really poor persons in the place; every one had some sufficient calling or an income to render it unnecessary; vagrants and paupers were instantly snapped up and provided for at "the Farm." There was, however, in a gambrel-roofed house here and there, a decayed old gentlewoman, occupying a scrupulously neat room with just a suspicion of maccaboy snuff in the air, who had her meals sent in to her

by the neighborhood—as a matter of course, and involving no sense of dependency on her side. It is wonderful what an extension of vitality is given to an old gentlewoman in this condition!

I would like to write about several of those ancient dames, as they were affectionately called, and to materialize others of the shadows that stir in my recollection; but this would be to go outside the lines of my purpose, which is simply to indicate one of the various sorts of changes that have come over the *vie intime* of formerly secluded places like Portsmouth—the obliteration of odd personalities, or, if not the obliteration, the general disregard of them. Everywhere in New England the impress of the past is fading out. The few old-fashioned men and women—quaint, shrewd, and racy of the soil—who linger in little, silvery-gray old homesteads strung along the New England roads and byways will shortly cease to exist as a class, save in the record of some such charming chronicler as Sarah Jewett or Mary Wilkins, on whose sympathetic pages they have already taken to themselves a remote air, an atmosphere of long-kept lavender and penny-royal.

Peculiarity of any kind requires encouragement in order to reach flower. The increased facilities of communication between points once isolated, the interchange of customs and modes of thought, make this encouragement more and more difficult each decade. The naturally inclined eccentric finds his sharp outlines rubbed off by unavoidable attrition

with a larger world than owns him. Insensibly he lends himself to the shaping hand of new ideas. He gets his reversible cuffs and paper collars from Cambridge, Mass., the scarabæus in his scarfpin from Mexico, and his ulster from everywhere. He has passed out of the chrysalis state of Odd Stick; he has ceased to be parochial; he is no longer distinct; he is simply the Average Man.

THE NEW NETHERLANDERS

CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW

*The Pilgrim Fathers of Manhattan*¹

Mr. President and Gentlemen:

I do not see why you should send to New York for after-dinner speakers when you have a chairman fully equipped to make a speech upon every toast that is presented. He takes the meat, as it were, desiccates it, and leaves the shell for the unfortunate guest who is to follow. Next year we will take him over to New York. The President of the New England Society of New York said to me: "Depew, you know a good thing when you see it. If you find anything of that sort in Philadelphia, let us know." I have found it.

I met on the train coming over here to-night a Pennsylvania Dutchman of several genera-

¹ Speech at the Sixth Annual Festival of the New England Society of Pennsylvania, at the Continental Hotel, Philadelphia, December 22, 1886.

tions, who asked me what business called me to Philadelphia. I replied: "I am going to attend the annual banquet of the New England Society of Pennsylvania; which I understand to be the most important event that takes place in that State." He remarked: "I did not know there was such a society, nor did I know there were enough Yankees in Philadelphia to form a decent crowd around a dinner-table; because the Yankees can't make money in Philadelphia, and a Yankee never stays where he can't make money."

It is a most extraordinary thing that one should come from New York to Philadelphia for the purpose of attending a New England dinner. It is a most extraordinary thing that a New England dinner should be held in Philadelphia. Your chairman to-night spoke of the hard condition of the Puritans who landed on Plymouth Rock. Let me say that if the Puritans had come up the Delaware, landed here, and begun life with terrapin and canvas-back duck, there never would have been any Puritan story to be retailed from year to year at Forefathers' dinners. If William Penn had ever contemplated that around his festive board would sit those Puritans with whom he was familiar in England, he would have exclaimed: "Let all the savages of the continent come, but not them." It is one of the pleasing peculiarities of the Puritan mind, as evinced in the admirable address of Mr. Curtis here to-night (and when you have heard Mr. Curtis, you have heard the best that a New Englander, who has been educated in New York, can do), that when

they erect a monument in Philadelphia or New York to the Pilgrim or Puritan, they say: "See how these people respect the man whom they profess to revile." But they paid for them and built the monuments themselves. The only New Englanders of Philadelphia whom I have met are the officials of the Pennsylvania Railroad. When I dine with them, enjoy their hospitality, revel in that glorious sociability which is their characteristic and charm, I think that they are Dutchmen; when I meet them in business, and am impressed with their desire to possess the earth, I think that they came over in the *Mayflower*.

There is no part of the world to-night, whether it be in the Arctic zone, or under the equatorial sun, or in monarchies, or in despotisms, or among the Fiji Islanders, where the New Englanders are not gathered for the purpose of celebrating and feasting upon Forefathers' Day. But there is this peculiarity about the New Englander, that if he cannot find anybody to quarrel with, he gets up a controversy with himself—inside of himself. We who expect to eat this dinner annually—and to take the consequences—went along peacefully for years with the understanding that the 22d of December was the day, when it suddenly broke out that the New Englander, within himself, had got up a dispute that the 21st was the day. I watched it with interest, because I always knew that when a Yankee got up a controversy with anybody else, it was for his profit; and I wondered how he could make anything by having a quarrel with himself. Then I found

that he ate both the dinners with serene satisfaction! But why should a Dutchman—a man of Holland descent—bring “coals to Newcastle” by coming here among the Pennsylvania Dutch for the purpose of attending a New England dinner? It is simply another tribute extorted by the conqueror from the conquered people, in compelling him not only to part with his possessions, his farms, his sisters, his daughters, but to attend the feast, to see devoured the things raised upon his own farm, and then to assist the conqueror to digest them by telling him stories.

My first familiarity with the Boston mind and its peculiarities was when I was a small boy, in that little Dutch hamlet on the Hudson where I was born, when we were electrified by the State superintendent of Massachusetts coming to deliver us an address. He said: “My children, there was a little flaxen-haired boy in a school that I addressed last year; and when I came over this year, he was gone. Where do you suppose he had gone?” One of our little Dutch innocents replied, “To heaven.” “Oh, no, my boy,” the superintendent said, “he is a clerk in a store in Boston!”

John Winslow said that the Connecticut River was the dividing line between the Continent of New England and the Continent of America; and he foresaw the time, in his imagination, when there should grow up, upon the eastern side of the Connecticut River, a population of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, who would enjoy their homes, their liberties, civil and religious, and build up a

state. He never looked forward to that time in the evolution of the species, when the New England farm would pass from the hands of the Puritan into the possession of the Irishman, who would cultivate it and earn a living where the Yankee could not live, and who would threaten the supremacy of New England faith and the supremacy of New England politics. If he had looked forward, he would have rejoiced in the fact that in the expansion of the New England idea and in the exodus of the New England Pilgrim, the Yankee marched forth over the continent to possess it and to build it up in the interests of civil and religious liberty; so that, instead of a few hundred thousands on the sterile hills of New England, sixty millions of people should rise up and call him blessed in the plentitude of a power, a greatness, and a future unequalled among the nations of the earth.

If from any of the planets in our sphere there should come a being endowed with larger perceptions and observations than our own, and not familiar with our civilization or creeds, and he should drop in at a New England dinner anywhere to-night, he might ask, "Who are these people?" and he would be told, "They are the people who claim to have created this great Republic, and to have put into it all that is in it that is worth preserving." If he should ask, "What is their creed and faith, and what do they worship?" he would be told to wait and listen to their speeches. When finally he had gone out, he would say, "They worship their forefathers and themselves." And

yet there is not a descendant of the Pilgrims in this room to-night who could stay in a ten-acre lot for three hours with his ancestors, to save his soul. There is not one of those gaunt, ascetic, and bigoted men who sang through his nose and talked cant, as described here so effectively on the other side of the picture presented by Mr. Curtis, who would not have every one of his descendants here to-night put into the lock-up as roystering blades, dangerous to the morals of the community; but, nevertheless, I can join in that measure of sweet song, of magnificent adulation, and superb eulogium which has been given to us from the tongue and pen of one who has no equal among our speakers and writers.

The Puritan was a grand character. He was a grand character because of what he was and did, and because of what circumstances made him. Fighting with the state for his liberty, he learned to doubt, and then to deny, the divine right of kings. Fighting with the Church for his conscience, its possession and expression, he learned to doubt, and then to deny, the divine right of hierarchies; but this created within him that spirit which made him recognize that the only foundation of the Church, if it will live, that the only foundation of the State, if it will be free, is man and the manhood of individuals. The family idea of all ages created the patriarch and his rule, the chieftain of the tribe and his rule, the despot and his rule, the military chieftain and his rule, the feudal lord and his rule; every step illuminating the individual, crushing liberty, pro-

ducing despotism, making the riders and the ridden; but when the Puritan discovered, as he enunciated in the cabin of the *Mayflower*, that there should be just and equal laws, and before those laws all men should stand equal; when he carried out in his administration that here should be the township as the basis of the state, and the state as the unit out of which should be created the Republic, then he discovered the sublime and eternal principle which solves all difficulties of home rule and modern liberty.

Now this magnificent man never would have amounted to much—never would have founded a state, never would have builded a government—if Providence had not sent him to Holland among my ancestors. The Pilgrim who went to Holland, and there learned toleration; there learned to respect the rights, the opinions, the liberties of others; there learned the principle of the common school and universal education; when he got to Plymouth Rock never burned witches, never hung Quakers, never drove out Baptists; he always fought against all this. It was the Puritan, twenty thousand strong, who came years afterward, who did those things; and, except for the leaven of the Pilgrim who had been to Holland, the Puritan would not be celebrated here to-night. Four hundred of them went to Holland, every man with a creed of his own and anxious to burn at the stake the other three hundred and ninety-nine because they did not agree with him; but being there enlightened, they discovered the magnificence of the uni-

verse. All over Holland, they saw compulsory school education sustained by the state. They found a country in which there was universal toleration of religion; in which the persecuted Jew could find an asylum; in which even the Inquisitor could be safe from the vengeance of his enemies; and there, after they had been prepared to found a state, and to build it, when they got down to Delft-Haven to depart, the Dutchmen, in their hospitality, gave them a farewell dinner as a send-off. It was the first good dinner they had ever had—the first square meal the Puritan had ever eaten. It followed that when they went on board the ship they were happy and they were—full. I do not know whether the word “full” had the same significance in those times that it has now, or not. And then Pastor Robinson preached the sermon in the afternoon, in which he told them that the whole truth was not given to Luther, though he thought so, nor to Calvin, though his disciples said so; but that in the future there would be a development of the truth which they must nurse and evolve. See how they have nursed and evolved it! Why, they have nursed and evolved that truth into so many creeds and doctrines on the sterile hills of New England, that they deny the existence of a heaven—many of them; and many more would deprive us of the comforts of a hell for—some people.

Now who were those people who founded New Netherlands, and who entertained so hospitably those Puritans and gave them such a grand send-off? I remember that a vicious

and irate adherent of the Stuarts says, in his history, looking with vengeance upon the accession of William of Orange to the throne of England, that the Puritan and the Hollander were shaken out of the same bag. And so they were. The same vigorous Northern stock came down to settle upon the marshes of Holland and in the fens of England. The stock that remained in England produced Pym and Hampden, and Sidney and Russell, with a cross of Swedish pirate or Northern conqueror; but the original stock which went to Holland fought off forever, during its whole existence, the power of the Roman Empire; fought off the hordes of barbarians who came down upon the ruins of the Roman Empire; fought off all the forces and powers of medieval chivalry, and won their grand victory when they took from the sea herself a land, that upon it they might govern themselves upon the principles of their own manhood and of civil and religious liberty. Those people were not a selfish people; but they liked to be by themselves and to govern themselves. Theirs was precisely the sentiment of the Hebrew speculator in Wall Street recently, who, when he had scooped everybody about him, gathered his co-conspirators around the festive board and said to them, "Now, shentlemen, we feel shust as if we were among ourselves."

Holland, at a time when there was no light for man elsewhere in the world, preserved the principles of civil liberty. Holland, at a time when learning was crushed out or buried in the monasteries, had her asylums, her libraries,

and her universities. Holland, at a time when the bigotry of the Church crushed out all expression of conscience and individual belief, had her toleration and religious liberty. For a century Holland was the safe-deposit company of the rights of man. For a century Holland was the electric light which illumined the world and saved mankind.

But, gentlemen, how did your forefathers repay my ancestors for all this kindness? Why, you came over to New York to teach school, and you got into the confiding Dutch families; you married their daughters; and then, as the able son-in-law, you administered upon the estate and you gave us—what was left. Yet I am willing to admit that the Dutchmen never could have colonized this country or created this Republic. I am willing to admit that my ancestors were too pleasure-loving, comfort-loving, and home-loving. They needed just that strain which you have, which is never tired, never restful, never at peace; just that strain which, receiving sufficient capital to start with from my ancestors, went out and crossed the borders and built up all these grand Western and Northwestern States, and carried civilization across the continent to the Pacific coast. You go into a territory, you organize the men of all nationalities and of all languages who are there into a territorial government; then you organize them into a State; then you take the governorships and the judgeships; then you found the capital at the place where you own all the town-lots; then you bring the territory into the Union, and the

glory and perfection of the federal principle is vindicated. But without you and just these incentives we never would have had an American Republic as great and glorious as it is.

But with all your selfishness, with all your desire for profit, for pelf, for gain, there is this underlying principle in the Yankee: in every community which he founds, in every State which he builds, he carries with him the church; he carries with him the school-house. He may want money, and he will get it if he can; he may want property, and he will get it if he can; but, first and foremost, he must have liberty of conscience, liberty of thought, liberty of speech—all of liberty that belongs to a man, consonant with the liberty of others; and he must have that same liberty for every man beside himself.

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